

This White House is already known for its publicly stated practice of letting no crisis go to waste. However, if no crisis exists, it will apparently invent one to exploit for political gain. Such is the case with the so-called standoff over the student loan interest rate.

Last Wednesday, the president – in full political mode – told a college rally in Nevada that Congress is unwilling to work with him to ensure that the federal student loan interest rate doesn't double effective July 1, 2012. "I have said to Congress, get this done. This is not complicated," he remarked.

The president's rhetoric is not only unhelpful, it is downright irresponsible. Unfortunately, it is also representative of the default position of the White House to create division – even a false division – in order to gain a public relations advantage.

Three weeks ago I wrote in this space about the substantial number of bills passed by the House of Representatives since January 2011 to nudge the stalled economy and help create badly needed jobs.

Thirty of these bills have been stalled in the Democrat-led Senate simply for political reasons which Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and President Obama feel trump the interests of the American people.

The president's failed efforts to tax and spend the country out of recession have done little to instill confidence among America's job creators or hardworking taxpayers. Small business owners continue to wait for signs of a better economy and an end to growing costly intervention in their businesses. Accordingly, they are not hiring and last month unemployment edged up to 8.2 percent. However, the president continues to blame the Republican House for the poor economy.

If standing in the way of legislation to restore lost jobs isn't enough, the president has determined that creating an impasse over the expiring student loan interest rate will also win him political points.

Here are the facts:

The current federally subsidized Stafford (student) Loan rate of 3.4 percent will double to 6.8 percent on July 1 for new undergraduate applicants unless Congress passes legislation to prevent an increase.

Last week, the president said, "Congress can't just sit on their hands." However, on April 27, 2012, the House passed, and I voted for, legislation to preserve the 3.4 percent rate for new Stafford Loans to undergraduate students.

The cost of maintaining the lower student loan rate is just shy of \$6 billion a year. To cover this expense, the House-passed bill would take unused money from a slush fund in President Obama's new health care law that the administration has already admitted is unneeded.

Not only has the House already passed legislation to preserve the lower student loan interest rate, but Speaker John Boehner has written President Obama offering alternatives for offsetting the cost if the president will simply sit down with us to reach an agreement. The White House isn't interested.

Sadly, it seems clear the Obama administration is unmoved by the plight of college students who are regrettably the latest pawns in its political chess game.

June Town Meetings:

I hope to see you at one of my Southwest Alabama town meetings this week.

Monday, June 11

9:00-10:00 a.m. – Grand Bay

Community Center

11:00 a.m.-Noon – Dauphin Island
Town Hall

2:00-3:00 p.m. – West Mobile
W. Mobile Regional Senior Center

4:00-5:00p.m. – Toulminville
Truevine Missionary Baptist Church

Tuesday, June 12

9:00-10:00 a.m. – Frisco City
City Hall

10:30-11:30 a.m. – Peterman
First Baptist Church

1:30-2:30 p.m. – Monroeville
Old Monroe County Courthouse

Wednesday, June 13

10:00-11:00 a.m. – McIntosh
Town Hall

2:00-3:00 p.m. – Chatom
Town Hall

4:00-5:00 p.m. – Creola
City Hall

Thursday, June 14

8:30-9:30 a.m. – Spanish Fort
City Hall

10:30-11:30 a.m. – Atmore
Municipal Auditorium

1:00-2:00 p.m. – Pollard
Town Hall

2:30-3:30 p.m. – East Brewton
Town Hall

Friday, June 15

9:00-10:00 a.m. – Silverhill
Town Hall

10:30-11:30 a.m. – Point Clear
St. Francis at the Point Church

1:30-2:30 p.m. – Foley
Glenlakes Golf Club

3:00-4:00 p.m. – Gulf Shores
City Hall

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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